Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. – 29. Canceled.

30. (Currently Amended) A method in a base station for ~~aligning~~ timing alignment of a field unit comprising:

receiving a first reverse link signal from [[a]] the field unit;

determining a gross timing offset with respect to other reverse link ~~channels~~ signals from other field units sharing the same reverse link logical channel;

transmitting the gross timing offset to the field unit;

following a coarse timing adjustment performed by the field unit based on the gross timing offset, calculating a fine timing adjustment based on a metric of the transmission path between the base station and the field units associated with a second received reverse link signal; and

selectively determining based on ~~said~~ the metric whether ~~said~~ the base station should control the timing alignment of ~~said~~ the field unit during a soft handover.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 further comprising:

transmitting a message to other base stations whether ~~said~~ the base station is going to control the alignment of ~~said~~ the field unit.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising:

reporting ~~said~~ the timing offset in the form of a timing command.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31 further comprising:

causing ~~said~~ the reverse link signal to be orthogonally aligned with the signals from ~~said~~ at least one other field unit on the reverse link logical channel.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33 further comprising:

determining a power level of the reverse link signal; and

providing feedback of the power level to the field unit in the form of a power command or a power message.

35. (Canceled).

36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 36~~ claim 30, ~~wherein said determination of said base station not to control said alignment is~~ further comprising initiating timing control handoff based on at least one of the following criteria: ~~(a)~~ a metric of the transmission path between the field unit and at least one of the other base stations exceeds a threshold for a predetermined timespan, ~~(b)~~ a metric of the transmission path between the field unit and at least one of the other base stations exceeds a threshold relative to a metric of a transmission path between ~~said~~ the base station and the field unit for a predetermined timespan, ~~(c)~~ a metric of the transmission path between ~~said~~ the base station and the field unit drops below an absolute metric, and ~~(d)~~ a metric of the transmission path between at least one of the other base stations and the field unit exceeds an absolute metric.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the metric includes at least one of the following: ~~(a)~~ power, ~~(b)~~ signal-to-noise ratio (SNR), ~~(c)~~ variance of the power, ~~(d)~~ variance of the SNR, ~~(e)~~ between the orthogonally aligned path an non-orthogonally aligned paths between the given field unit and ~~said~~ the base station and ~~said~~ the other base stations, relative ratio of the ~~(i)~~ power, ~~(ii)~~ SNR, ~~said~~ the variance of the power, or ~~said~~ the variance of the SNR, ~~(f)~~ bit error rate, and ~~(g)~~ energy per chip divided by the interference density (Ec/Io).